



**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS
OF BRENTHAM SOCIETY AND BRENTHAM HERITAGE SOCIETY**

Thursday 14th October 2004, 7.30pm, Brentham Club

Residents in attendance: 42, including Committee

BHS Members in attendance: 14, including Committee

Committee Members present:

Brentham Society: Sue Elliott (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Heather Moore, Martin Mortimore

Brentham Heritage Society: Sue Elliott (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Heather Moore

Apologies: Barry Murphy, Sean Cadogan (BS); Alan Henderson (BHS)

The meeting was in two parts:

PART 1: Talk by John Scott on the Bedford Park Logbook Project 'From Knowledge Comes Care'

John Scott outlined the history of Bedford Park, describing it as the 'first garden suburb' and explained the rationale for the development of logbooks by the Bedford Park Society for each of the 350 listed houses on the estate. Acting as a data-base for owners, architects and planners and a framework for recording change, the logbooks contain information on the individual houses, as well as general guidance on the application of planning regulations to listed buildings, technical notes on specific aspects of conservation, and historical notes on Bedford Park and its architects.

After John Scott had answered questions from those present, Sue Elliott thanked him for his talk and said that it would inspire the Brentham Society to think about whether something similar was feasible for Brentham.

PART 2: MAIN BUSINESS

1. Minutes of the 2003 AGM and Matters Arising:

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting – proposed by Anne Barnes, seconded by Bevan Jones.

2. Chair's Report (Sue Elliott)

(a) Brentham Society

This had been a busy and challenging year for the Brentham Society.

Membership:

After being in the doldrums, membership had risen by 7% on 2003 to 47% of Brentham households: there were now 320 members, compared with 274 last year. Donations were also up – 134 members donated, representing 43% of members, compared with 96 (35%) last year. Thanks were due to all who donated. The highest percentage of members occurred in Brentham Way (top), Ludlow and Woodfield Road; there had been an encouraging increase in membership in Meadvale and Denison Roads from a low base, but membership levels in Woodfield Crescent and Pitshanger Lane were still disappointing. Thanks were due to Sean and Debbi Cadogan of Neville Road for their enormous efforts in organising Membership so efficiently, as well as to the Membership collectors.

Newsletter and Communications:

This had been a great year for *Brentham News*, which goes to every household on the Brentham Estate, not just members, and is really appreciated. 2004 saw the 150th anniversary edition – an 8-page format in full colour – and the start of a new A4 colour format for the June and September editions. The Newsletter has now settled to three such editions a year, plus ‘News Updates’ as necessary (there were three of these in 2004).

After having edited 23 editions of *Brentham News* for over six years, Alan Henderson was handing over the baton to Michael McCarthy, who takes over from the next edition (New Year 2005). Alan had revolutionised *Brentham News*, arranging sponsorship by Grimshaws and overseeing a massive increase in quality and editorial, as well as introducing colour. Sue expressed her thanks to Alan, and to Michael for taking it on.

The Brentham Noticeboards, which are used to advertise both BS and BHS events but also local events of interest to residents, had been ably maintained and updated by George and Anne Barnes until David Webster took over this autumn; thanks were due to all and also to the Street Representatives who provide new residents with Welcome Packs.

Wendy and Peter Sender had done sterling work in maintaining the Brentham website, which had seen an impressive 29% increase in visits to the site compared with 2003. New features included planning advice pages and new links to other sites, such as the Pitshanger Community Association (PCA) and Pitshanger Books, but sadly the egroup had foundered through lack of usage.

Planning and Environment:

This had been another very busy year. Planning issues were dealt with by Heather Moore and Tony Miller (co-opted onto the Committee during the year to help Heather with the large workload, using his planning experience as a councillor). Tony had taken charge of planning enforcement, following up unauthorised buildings and changes with the local authority so that action can be taken to have them put right.

There had been a steady stream of planning applications – about 50 over the year, representing a slight increase. These were mostly for rear extensions and loft conversions, but included one imaginative garden layout in which four houses had co-operated to create a communal lawned, paved and brick area in Arts & Crafts style. Most applications were unproblematic and approved with minimal changes, but some needed more substantial revision to meet Brentham’s special requirements.

Sue thanked both Heather and Tony for devoting their time, and reminded residents that prior consultation saves time and effort and that the Brentham Society is still having trouble with work not carried out according to plans, which means enforcement action has to be taken. This would be avoidable if residents checked that builders were not cutting corners.

A very successful Planning and Conservation Question Time was held in March at which Conservation Officer Charmian Baker and Senior Planning Officer Robert Coomber answered questions from about 60 residents. Pat Baxendale and colleagues from the Brentham Planning Advisory Panel also contributed. This was a very useful occasion, which it is intended to repeat every couple of years.

A longer-term goal is to work with the Planning Advisory Panel and Conservation Officers on a new Policy and Design Guide for Brentham, on the lines of the technical notes in the Bedford Park logbooks. The last Design Guide appeared in 1988 and a new edition is urgently needed to guide planning decisions. Heather Moore, Tony Miller, Pat Baxendale and John Kelly were working with the Conservation Officers to get this going.

Sue reminded those present that virtually any change to the outside of your house, its hedges, fences, gates and walls need planning permission, and that if in doubt, residents should ask Heather, Pat, John or any member of the Committee.

A proposal by the Council to include two Brentham roads in a new Controlled Parking Zone had not been proceeded with. A large majority of residents had been against inclusion and the Council had accepted that there was absolutely no justification for a CPZ in these roads.

Events and Activities:

The usual full calendar of events had included Carol Singing, supporting the May Day procession and celebrations, and the annual Family Cycle in July (which had 15 takers despite indifferent weather).

Two traditional annual events had both been held in June this year: the Strawberry Tea and Brentham Garden Day. Despite a clash with the PCA's Party in the Park, and heavy showers, the Strawberry Tea had been well attended: visitors included Steve Pound MP and local councillors. £138 had been taken and six new members recruited. Barbara Murray was thanked for hosting it. Brentham Garden Day had been immaculately organised for the first time by Nita Davis. 140 people toured 10 gardens and the entry fee and teas made £440 for the Brentham Society. This is now a successful and well-established event, but is labour-intensive for all involved – thanks were due to Nita, the gardeners, and those providing teas.

Councillor Nigel Sumner had initiated a Pitshanger Clean Up Day, a joint collaboration between the Council and the PCA. Tony Miller was thanked for his hard work on the day. The Brentham Society had suggested that in future the clean-up should apply to domestic as well as commercial premises. (It was noted that Ealing Council has a free graffiti removal service, Tel.: 8825 6000.)

Relations with local organisations:

Relations with the PCA and the Club had been consolidated and a joint Dinner was held for local councillors, organisations and opinion-formers to demonstrate the 'vision' of working together for a better Pitshanger. However, plans for a May Ball proved too ambitious for planning time available (and in the event 1st May was cold and wet).

Key to working together to enhance the quality of life in the Brentham area were the plans to regenerate the Brentham Club. There was a history of informal talks in the last three years, which had now borne fruit as the Club was now taking active steps to reinvent itself. Sue Elliott, and Ron Bloomfield of the PCA had been invited to join the Club's Regeneration Board. There were ambitious plans both to change culture of the Club to look more towards its local community, and to extend its facilities in a new building programme, involving complete refurbishment and an extension on the lines of the Sutcliffe design of 1911. The results of a feasibility study had been presented to residents in roads immediately adjoining the Club at a lively meeting in July and their comments and concerns were being taken on board. The full proposals were likely to be ready for public view and consultation early in the new year; meanwhile the banks were looking at the Business Plan. Sue believed that the proposed development was the most important thing to happen in Brentham for the past 50 years. She would be staying on the Regeneration Board and would keep in close touch with the Brentham Society.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

Sue reminded the meeting that the Brentham Heritage Society (BHS) was the registered charity sister to the Brentham Society, designed to educate and inform people about Brentham, its architectural and social heritage, and that she had taken over the Chair from Wendy Sender a year ago.

A significant initiative had been commissioning a comprehensive photographic survey of every building on the Brentham estate for the Archive and the website, and as a reference for residents, who would receive a photo of their own house. Hampstead Garden Suburb had done this very successfully. Two photographers had tendered for the work and Wendy Sender was selected, not only for her knowledge of the estate but because of the lower costs of her more impressive and comprehensive proposal. Completion of the survey was planned by end of the year or early next.

The BHS was also interested in commissioning a short video/DVD about the life and history of Brentham – this would be made by professional film-maker and BS Committee member Martin Mortimore. Martin was producing a 'taster' tape – this would be an expensive project but a worthwhile and potentially lucrative one if copies were sold.

The Brentham book had sold steadily in local bookshops and direct from the BHS during the year. The stock was now down to under 70 copies and a second edition (rather than a straight reprint) would be considered during 2005.

Applications to DCMS to obtain Grade II Listing for Holyoake House and 11 Winscombe Crescent (Ramsay Hughes' former house in its almost original condition) had taken a great deal of work and had the support of Conservation Officers, but were turned down on the advice of English Heritage, although Holyoake House had only just missed.

BHS members had made a visit to Letchworth Garden City during its centenary year, combined with a visit to Welwyn Garden City. Letchworth was fascinating, but sadly suffered from some inappropriate extensions and a rash of UPVC windows in parts of the estate; a return visit to Brentham had been cancelled at last minute due to lack of interest. There had been a very successful visit from the Surrey Arts & Crafts group in February and we would make a return visit in the new year.

Once again Clive Hicks had conducted two successful guided tours of the estate with quite large groups for the London Open House Weekend in September and Sue expressed her thanks to Clive, as well as to Jackie Moss for organising it. Some Brentham merchandise was sold.

Peter Sender was thanked for his work as webmaster of the Brentham website, which continues to play a key part in the education and communications work of the BHS.

Sue concluded by saying that she was now standing down from the BS after three years as joint BS/BHS Chair, which she had very much enjoyed, although she had originally only agreed to serve for a year! She particularly thanked Barry Murphy, who had acted as Chair during her six month sabbatical, also Eleanor Cowie as Secretary and Heather Moore for their hard work and support. Sue would be happy to hand over to Tony Miller, who, if elected, would be well qualified to take on the challenge. Presenting Sue with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of both Committees, Richard Costella thanked her for the tremendous contribution she had made to the Societies and the estate over the past three years.

3. Treasurer's Report (Richard Costella)

(a) Brentham Society

First of all, Richard reported that accounts of both Societies, previously circulated in draft form, had now been audited, and signed off.

The Brentham Society had made a good surplus over the past year. The main difference between the years was that in 2003 we had made a large purchase of merchandise, the benefits of which were now flowing through to the Society. Subscriptions and donations had increased in 2004, and income from most events improved. The cost of the newsletter increased, as we were using more colour, but we still received very welcome sponsorship from Grimshaws.

Although the Society was good at fund raising, unusually it was not so good at spending the funds, and the cash surplus had increased by £900 in the year. He would welcome ideas from members at the end of the meeting. Ideas received so far had been: more benches, joining Ealing's tree sponsorship scheme, and the employment of someone to update the planning guidelines.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

Sales of the Brentham book had remained strong, providing good income for the Society. Much of the income from these sales had been spent on the first stages of the photographic survey. There was very little other to note about the accounts. As previously mentioned, funds have been earmarked for the photographic survey and a possible new edition of the book.

Thanks were due once again to Andy Akerman for auditing both sets of accounts.

4. Election of Committees 2004-5:

(a) Brentham Society

The following members were willing to stand again: Sean Cadogan, Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Martin Mortimore, Heather Moore and Barry Murphy.

Tony Miller of 6 Winscombe Crescent, previously a co-opted member, had been nominated by Heather Moore, seconded by Debbi Cadogan, and was prepared to succeed Sue Elliott as Chair. (Tony, a retired human resources consultant and former Ealing councillor with extensive planning experience, has lived on the Brentham Estate for over 20 years.)

One nomination for a new member had been received: Adrian McAllister of 12 Meadvale Road, proposed by Sue Elliott, seconded by Richard Costella. (Adrian went to St. Gregory's School until moving to West Ealing and then Hanwell, moving back to Meadvale Road eight months ago. Adrian works on large infrastructure projects for an engineering consultancy as a Chartered Electrical Engineer,

is interested in architecture and conservation and particularly enjoys buildings like Brentham that are designed to look 'in harmony' with their environment.)

Unfortunately, neither Tony nor Adrian was able to attend the AGM, owing to prior commitments.

Tony Miller, Adrian McAllister and the other committee members were duly elected.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

Sue Elliott explained that the BHS constitution allows for between four and nine committee members, but that members can be co-opted if necessary. Alan Henderson was resigning from the Committee; the following members were willing to stand again: Sue Elliott (Chair), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Richard Costella (Treasurer), and Heather Moore. No nominations for new members had been received, and the committee was duly elected.

5. Garden Awards

Nita Davis thanked Brian Vaughan, who was unable to be present, for once again judging the gardens and writing the citations. Brian wished to thank Gill Silvester and Maureen Monaghan for their help with the judging. This year there had been many more gardens to choose from, as professionally designed gardens had been included for the first time. A comment by Rachel de Thame in a recent Sunday Times article, that front gardens provided 'outdoor theatre' could apply to the whole estate.

<u>Award</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Runners-up</u>
Spring	9 Brentham Way	34 Ludlow Road, 2 Ruskin Gardens, 46 Meadvale Road
Summer	46 Denison Road	46 Brentham Way, 67 Meadvale Road, 51 Ludlow Road
Autumn	21 Ludlow Road	111 Fowlers Walk, 44 Denison Road, 1 Neville Road

The Rose Bowl for the whole year was awarded to 115 Fowlers Walk.

6. Members' Questions

Peter Bigwood had been told by the Council that although the paths by the side of St. Barnabas and between Brentham and Brunner were recognised by the Council for lighting and maintenance purposes, they were not, in fact, formal rights of way. He would like to ask the Brentham Society to obtain written evidence from residents of use of the paths over the last 20 years, and to write to the Council, requesting that they be designated as public rights of way.

Secondly, Peter believed that ownership of Vivian Green was not clear and suggested that the Brentham Society should approach the Council to make the area a designated 'public open space'. This could be done regardless of ownership. It was confirmed that the BS Committee would put in a request to Planning Policy to include it in the next update of the Unitary Development Plan and would take action on the question of rights of way.

Tony Arnell asked why the price of the Brentham book had gone up to £30. Sue Elliott replied that this had been suggested by the Pitshanger Bookshop to bring it into line with the price of comparable books.

Peter Bigwood then raised the subject of the Brentham Club and the fact that the Brentham Society is currently supporting the concept of regeneration. He expressed the concern that residents attending the July meeting had not seen a Business Plan, and that it appeared from previous accounts that the projected costs of the development could not possibly be covered by the Club's income from membership. He wished to propose that the Brentham Society should not fully support a proposal involving a such large financial investment without first seeking the consent of its members. Sue Elliott explained that the Business Plan had not been developed in July, but would be issued in a condensed version in the next three months so that residents could see how it would all add up. She pointed out that the banks would not lend to the Club if the Business Plan did not make sense, and secondly, that the money would not come just from membership fees – although the Club envisaged an expansion in pay-as-you-go users of its facilities by non-members – but also from other revenue-generating elements. However, Peter's central point would be taken on board by the Brentham Society Committee, who would consider convening a Special General Meeting of residents when the plans were clearer.

As there was no other business, the meeting closed at 9.40pm.